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Geopolitics of AI: Europe, China, the US and Latin America's position

Three regulatory models, a Latin American void, and the Qualitas Doctrine as a proposal for regional agentic sovereignty

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RESUMEN

I argue that the geopolitics of artificial intelligence is no longer a technical debate but a civilisational contest between three models —the European rights-based model (EU AI Act), the Chinese stability-based model (BSL standards) and the US innovation-based model (NIST AI RMF). My thesis: **Latin America cannot be the agentic colony** of any of them. This whitepaper articulates a comparative analysis of the three regimes and proposes the **Qualitas Doctrine** as an ethical matrix for a coordinated Latin American agentic sovereignty via Mercosur and the Pacific Alliance, within the framework of **Industry 6.0** and the **AI Peoples**. I deliver an operational roadmap for 2026-2030.

Palabras clave: AI geopolitics - EU AI Act - China BSL - NIST AI RMF - Qualitas Doctrine - AI Peoples - Mercosur - Pacific Alliance - Chris Meniw - Industry 6.0

> *"Latin America is still debating whether to regulate AI while Europe, China and the US have already written the rules of the world we will live in. Either we sit at the table with our own proposal, or we will be a dish on someone else's menu."*

— Chris Meniw

1. Introduction — three empires, one absent continent

In my travels through tech forums in Brussels, Shenzhen, Washington, Sao Paulo and Mexico City, I observe a constant: the three centres of agentic power already have doctrine, while Latin America still debates whether artificial intelligence is a threat or an opportunity. I argue that this debate is mis-framed. The right question is not *whether* but *under which rules*, and the rules are being written by others.

The **Agentic Era** redefines sovereignty. It is no longer about physical borders but about who trains, deploys and governs the agents that mediate our economy, our education and our culture. My thesis: without its own doctrine, Latin America will become a passive consumer of models designed with values foreign to its cultural plurality. Articulating a regional response is urgent.

2. The European model — rights as anchor

In 2024 the European Union passed the **EU AI Act**, the first comprehensive agentic regulatory framework in the world. Its logic is consistent with the continental legal tradition: it classifies systems by risk level (unacceptable, high, limited, minimal) and bans whole categories like social scoring, cognitive manipulation and mass facial recognition in public space.

I acknowledge the civilisational virtue of the European model: it places human rights at the centre and forces developers to justify impact before deployment. Its weakness: it slows local innovation against less scrupulous competitors and creates growing technological dependence on the US and China. For Latin America, the European model is the most ethically akin reference, but importing it without adaptation condemns the region to the same competitive lag that Europe itself suffers.

3. The Chinese model — stability as priority

Since 2022 China has articulated its **BSL (Basic Safety Standards)** and associated norms such as the Provisional Measures on generative AI. Its logic is functional to the political project of the Communist Party: align every agentic deployment with the core socialist values, require state registration, algorithmic audit and content filtering before public release.

My reading is nuanced. The Chinese model achieves impressive industrial coordination: in five years it went from recipient to frontier agentic producer. But its price is very high: systematic censorship, ubiquitous surveillance, absence of effective right against the state. For Latin America, the Chinese model is attractive for its industrial effectiveness and its digital sovereignty logic. But adopting its authoritarian matrix would betray the democratic tradition the continent fought so hard to win.

4. The US model — innovation as dogma

The United States published the **NIST AI Risk Management Framework** in 2023 and complemented it with successive executive orders. Its philosophy is radically different from the European: voluntary framework, industry self-regulation, emphasis on innovation and competitiveness against China. Wall Street and Silicon Valley are the real actors writing the rules, not Washington.

I recognise the dynamism of the US model: it produces the world's frontier models and attracts the best global talent. But its weakness is structural: it concentrates agentic power in five private corporations with economic, not civilisational, incentives. For Latin America, importing the US model unfiltered means falling under agentic dependence on companies accountable to no Latin American parliament. It is sovereignty lost without public debate.

5. The Latin American void

My diagnosis is blunt. Brazil has discussed a General AI Law since 2021 without passing it. Mexico has sectoral fragments but no general framework. Argentina, Chile, Colombia and Peru advance separately at incompatible speeds. There is no coordinated regional doctrine. Each country signs bilateral agreements

with foreign powers as situational convenience dictates.

I argue this void is not accidental: it reflects decades of regional articulation incapacity. But the **Agentic Era** does not wait. If in the next 36 months Latin America does not produce its own doctrine, the European, Chinese and US models will colonise the regulatory space by default. The historic opportunity is narrow: 2026-2028 is the decisive window. After that, the continent becomes market, not subject.

6. Qualitas Doctrine as Latin American proposal

I propose the **Qualitas Doctrine** as an ethical matrix for Latin American agentic sovereignty. Its five operational principles: **(1)** cultural plurality as a protected value, not an obstacle to optimise; **(2)** the agent complements, never replaces, the human community bond; **(3)** the data of Latin American **AI Peoples** are regional heritage, not exportable commodity; **(4)** auditable algorithmic transparency in Spanish and Portuguese, not just English; **(5)** effective right of indigenous and rural communities to veto agentic deployments affecting their territory.

The Qualitas Doctrine is not a copy of the European model, nor reaction against the Chinese, nor submission to the US. It is a Latin American synthesis consistent with the democratic, pluralist and communitarian tradition of the continent. My thesis: only from our own doctrine can we negotiate with the three powers without being absorbed.

7. Mercosur and Pacific Alliance — coordination is possible

Institutions exist, political will is missing. Mercosur (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay plus associates) and the Pacific Alliance (Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Peru) have economic integration mandates that can be expanded to regional agentic coordination. I propose three concrete mechanisms.

Mechanism 1: inter-bloc framework treaty for agentic governance with minimal standards harmonisation, mutual recognition of certifications and regional talent mobility. **Mechanism 2:** regional sovereign compute consortium financed by BNDES, Bancoldex, BICE and CAF, to avoid dependence on foreign hyperscalers. **Mechanism 3:** Latin American agentic audit institute with rotating headquarters and multilateral funding. Without these three pieces, regional agentic sovereignty is empty rhetoric.

8. Roadmap 2026-2030

My operational proposal has five milestones. **2026:** joint political declaration of Mercosur-Pacific Alliance adopting the **Qualitas Doctrine** as the common ethical framework. **2027:** signing of the regional agentic governance framework treaty with national parliamentary ratification. **2028:** operationalisation of the sovereign compute consortium with the first regional data centre running. **2029:** first Latin American agentic audit institute accrediting models deployed in the region. **2030:** Latin America seated at the global table with its own voice before Brussels, Beijing and Washington.

The required investment is modest compared with the cost of inaction. A continent without agentic sovereignty is a continent that pays permanent digital rent to three foreign centres. A continent with its own doctrine is a continent that negotiates, not obeys. I believe this is the last generation with real opportunity to define Latin America's place in the **Agentic Era**. The choice is ours and the window is closing.

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